

Weekly Market Bulletin

State of New Hampshire
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From Your Commissioner...

Stiff Penalties for Woodland Mud Bog Rampage

A night of hooliganism that caused thousands of dollars of damage to roads and gates in a large managed forest has netted three Grafton County men hefty fines, suspended jail sentences and probation plus court orders to pay \$6,500 in restitution to the landowner.

The action by the Lebanon District Court should stand as a clear warning that property damage arising out of reckless operation of wheeled vehicles on private lands can cost miscreants heavily if they get caught.

On May 6 two of the men broke down gates on wood roads leading into the Thomson Family Tree Farm in Orford and entered the property with a four-wheel-drive pickup. The tree farm is open to hunters and other passive recreation—it's only off limits to wheeled vehicles because of the fragility of the terrain.

They then proceeded on a "mud bog" caper, horsing the truck over logging trails and cutting deep ruts, eroding the fragile forest soil, even managing to tear a bumper off the late-model truck. Eventually the rig became stuck, and the pair summoned the third man to try to pull them out of the mud with another pickup.

Soon the second pickup was mired, too, so the trio helped themselves to Tom Thomson's new John Deere 5510 tractor that they'd seen on their way in. In short order they got the stolen tractor stuck trying to extricate the trucks.

At daybreak the jig was up. Orford and New Hampshire State Police swung into action, conducted an investigation, made arrests on a variety of charges, and, in late June, secured guilty pleas on all counts.

Tom Thomson is still seething about the whole sorry episode, but he's extremely pleased with the nonsense way the Lebanon district court judge addressed the case.

"I think this sends a message to landowners all over the state that this kind of stuff is going to be dealt with severely," he says.

Barn assessment grants are again available through the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance. Funding from the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources has allowed the popular program to be revived.

Small matching grants are designed to help barn owners conduct condition analyses, develop plans of work and budgets and, if appropriate, examine re-use ideas. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis every three months, and forms may be obtained by calling 224-2281 or emailing:

admin@nhpreservation.org

Tucked away in a sprawling atmosphere-controlled warehouse in Conway is one of the nation's top collections of antique horse-drawn vehicles. Though not open to the general public, it is organized and

presented in professional museum style and people with a serious interest can visit the facility by appointment with its owners.

Margaret and Sut Marshall are the owners; their day jobs are as proprietors of Abbott's Premium Ice Creams, regional distributors for Unilever/Ben & Jerry's.

In this collection of more than 150 specimens are found a half dozen Concord coaches made by the legendary Abbott and Downing Company of Concord, which, in the 19th century, was one of America's leading manufacturers of conveyances for commerce, agriculture and human transport.

The Marshall collection ranges from Spartan baker's delivery carts to ornate carriages of the Victorian Era upper crust. There are farm wagons made by John Deere and a steam fire engine built at the Amoskeag works in Manchester. There are sleighs, an RFD mailman's buggy, even a hearse.

Many of the pieces are in fine but unrestored condition; the rest look as they did the day left their maker's shop. Each has its own story of purpose and design, and the Marshalls retain a professional historian who researches each piece and creates an explanatory text board that explains the wagon's origins and uses.

It's a great place to learn about the rural—and urban—past.

Steve Taylor, Commissioner